



## New Jersey Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program

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### Materials Guidance for Producers

Organic farmers must only use materials that comply with the USDA's regulations for organic production and handling (7 CFR Part 205, the National Organic Program; Final Rule). This includes all inputs used on a farm to produce organic crops: fertilizers, mulches, seeds and planting stock, pesticides, livestock health materials, feed additives, etc. It is the farmer's responsibility to evaluate and choose materials and products that are compliant with the rule. When in doubt, certified farmers should call their certification agent.

#### What does the federal organic regulation say about materials?

Copies of the Rule are provided to all certification applicants, and you should read it and refer to it regularly. Generally, the Rule allows the use of natural materials and prohibits synthetic materials. *Exceptions* to this basic principle (allowed synthetics and prohibited naturals) are specifically listed in the part of the regulation called "the National List", found at §§205.600-607. Materials are also discussed in other sections of the Rule, such as §205.105, which prohibits sludge, ionizing radiation, and genetically modified organisms, and §205.203 which defines compost and restrictions on the use of manure.

#### How does NJDA evaluate the materials I use?

The National Organic Program Final Rule (as amended) is used to determine whether and how a material can be used on an organic farm. As a certified party, you must demonstrate that both the specific material, and the way it is used comply with the rule. The information you provide in your Organic Farm Plan, Annual Updates, Materials Logs and other forms, as well as the findings during your annual organic inspection are part of our evaluation process.

#### How can I tell if a specific, brand name material is allowed in organic production?

The rule determines whether and how a material can be used in organic production. However, the rule is general, mentions only a few materials specifically, and includes no brand names. **Individual products, especially pesticides, often do not list all ingredients (inert ingredients are not usually identified). Labels do not always list the source of ingredients, which can also affect acceptability.** This makes it difficult for individuals to make informed decisions, especially for proprietary products.

Tools like the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) lists give you the relevant rule language and use restrictions by material type (the **Generic List**) or evaluate specific products for compliance (**Brand Name Products List**). Every NJDA certified party is provided with current OMRI lists to aid in making informed materials choices. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also reviews organic pesticide materials for compliance with the rule and allows the new EPA "For Organic Production" label (see below) to be used on compliant, registered pesticides. It is important to understand that OMRI and EPA review programs are voluntary programs, and that not every generic or brand name material that is compliant with the rule is reviewed and listed by these organizations.

EPA and OMRI reviews are performed by competent authorities who have access to complete information about the material. You may use materials that are not reviewed by EPA or OMRI, but you must be able to provide enough information about the material for compliance evaluation. This includes ALL ingredient and manufacturing details. Claims of organic status made by product manufacturers, or product approval by other certification agencies are subject to verification and review by NJDA. If you use a material that is noncompliant, the certification status of effected production areas or the entire operation may be seriously affected. ***You are strongly urged to have materials not already approved by OMRI or EPA reviewed by NJDA prior to use in your organic production areas.***

#### EPA-approved label:



#### OMRI-approved label (optional):

